
Maryland's



**Guide For
Drivers Over 55**

MVA

CONTENTS

<u>KNOW THYSELF!</u>	1
Assessing Your Limitations	
<u>SEEING IS BELIEVING!</u>	1
Compensating for Vision Problems	
<u>HEAR NO EVIL!</u>	3
Compensating for Hearing Loss	
<u>REFLEX ACTION!</u>	4
If You're Slower, but Still Steady	
<u>DO ONLY THE STRONG SURVIVE?</u>	4
If You've Lost Some Strength	
<u>NOT HEALTHY AS AN OX?</u>	5
Judging Your Fitness to Drive	
<u>THE MEDICINE GOES DOWN!</u>	6
The Side Effects of Medication	
<u>THE BEST LAID PLANS</u>	7
Advance Trip Planning	
<u>DECISIONS! DECISIONS!</u>	9
Vehicle Size and Equipment	
<u>AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION</u>	10
Vehicle Maintenance	
<u>THE RIBBON OF HIGHWAYS</u>	11
Interstate Driving	

Continued on next page!

CONTENTS

<u>DEFENSE! DEFENSE!</u>	14
Driving Defensively	
<u>EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED</u>	15
Handling Emergency Situations	
<u>TIME TO TURN IN YOUR WHEELS??</u>	19
Evaluating Whether to Keep on Driving	
<u>PICTURE THIS!</u>	21
MVA Photo Identification Card	
<u>IT'S THE LAW!</u>	21
Applicable Provisions of the Maryland Vehicle Law and Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR)	
<u>SUMMING IT ALL UP</u>	25

MESSAGE FROM THE MVA ADMINISTRATION

Dear Fellow Marylanders:

Some of us slow down a bit in later years and may have trouble responding to things around us. The presence of potentially dangerous driving situations, which can happen so quickly, might not be immediately recognizable to the more mature driver.

Therefore, we at the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) have developed this informative handbook which, we hope, will help you identify the driving hazards that exist and perhaps reinforce some safe driving practices.

Whether a new licensee or one who has driven for many years, it is never too late to sharpen your skills or develop new habits for continued years of safe driving. Although dedicated to the driver over 55, we feel that every motorist in Maryland can benefit from the timely tips listed in this guide.

We wish you good health and many more safe years on Maryland roads.

INTRODUCTION

This guide has been written to help the older, more experienced driver continue his or her good driving habits and maintain the independence that is so valuable to us all.

Most drivers 55 and over have driven carefully for many years and have maintained good driving records. However, accident rates are higher for those in this age group than for drivers in their middle years. Needless to say, it becomes even more important to pay attention to possible physical limitations, the condition of one's motor vehicle and the "rules of the road" than ever before.

The MVA is committed to helping Marylanders do just that. In the pages that follow, we hope to bring items to your attention that you may not have thought about at all, but could save your license or your life, such as: assessing and compensating for sensory or physical limitations; understanding the effects of prescribed and over-the-counter medication; choosing and maintaining motor vehicles; planning your trips in advance; driving on the interstate; driving defensively; handling emergencies; and knowing when the time has come to drive less.

Last, but most certainly not least, this guide touches upon some interesting and applicable provisions of the Maryland Vehicle Law regarding the privilege of possessing a driver's license.

We hope this information will prove useful as you drive many more accident-free miles on Maryland roads.

KNOW THYSELF!

ASSESSING YOUR LIMITATIONS

Know thyself! This sounds simple, but it is not necessarily easy. Periodically, a good, hard look at our physical being is in order. Do I see as well as I did last week or last year? Have I had my hearing checked recently? Am I tiring more easily? Do I have any health problems which could affect my driving? Do I react more slowly to situations around me? Have I visited my doctor?

This soul-searching might turn up the fact that, yes, there are some limitations that did not used to exist. If so, the forward-looking person will most likely want to know what he or she can do to compensate, yet still be a responsible motorist.

Read on--we have some suggestions for you.

SEEING IS BELIEVING!

COMPENSATING FOR VISION PROBLEMS

You need to see well to drive well. Vision problems come on so gradually that most of us hardly notice. In particular, night vision can become a problem for people of all ages who can see quite well in the daytime. For some, it is the darkness itself; for others, the glare of headlights.

Although many people can see very well straight ahead, their peripheral, or side vision, may be less than adequate. Needless to say, if you cannot see out of the corner of your eyes, you will have trouble seeing what is around you on the road.

If you have any of these limitations, here are some suggestions to compensate:

- ◆ Have a complete eye examination AT LEAST once a year, including a check for night and side vision.
- ◆ Make some adjustments in your night driving. Before you start out, take a few minutes to let your eyes adjust to the dark. Avoid heavy traffic and do not look directly at bright lights or signs.
- ◆ Do not wear heavily tinted glasses at night, since they make it much harder to see after dark. If you absolutely must wear tinted glasses, use the type that change tint as the light changes.
- ◆ Use your high beams on the highway at night at times when these bright lights will not bother the drivers ahead of you or those in oncoming cars. Remember to turn back to your low beams whenever someone is within 500 feet of your car.
- ◆ When an oncoming car "blinds" you with its bright lights, look to the right edge of the road. Use the edge or the right lane marking as a guide. Although it takes a long time to recover your full vision after you have been "blinded" in this manner, you will recover from the glare much faster if you look away.
- ◆ If you have a problem with peripheral, or side vision, make an extra effort to glance from side to side. Use your mirrors often and ask your riders to alert you to things you might not notice.
- ◆ Let someone else handle the night driving. If you must drive at night, keep to the streets you know!

HEAR NO EVIL!

COMPENSATING FOR HEARING LOSS

Your hearing should be checked periodically by your physician. Although not as important on the road as your vision, hearing is definitely one of the senses used in driving.

The following suggestions can help compensate for poor hearing:

- ◆ Wear your hearing aid, if you have one.
- ◆ Obtain a hearing aid, if you need one.
- ◆ Become more observant of things around you.
- ◆ Make frequent use of your rearview mirror.
- ◆ Be on the look-out for emergency vehicles.
- ◆ Install an outside mirror on the right side of your vehicle.
- ◆ Leave a window partially open on either side of your car.
- ◆ Keep your radio off altogether, or turn the volume down very low.
- ◆ Keep the fan on your heater or air conditioner low enough so that it does not drown out the traffic sounds.

REFLEX ACTION!

IF YOU'RE SLOWER, BUT STILL STEADY

As we become older, our reflexes slow down. We cannot react to situations as fast as we used to. Frequent "close calls" or a recent accident may be a signal that your responses behind the wheel have slowed. You can compensate for slightly slower reaction time by increasing the distance between you and the vehicles ahead of you.

DO ONLY THE STRONG SURVIVE?

IF YOU'VE LOST SOME STRENGTH

As the result of either illness or the normal aging process, some people lose strength in their hands, arms or legs. Sometimes this loss of strength is temporary; sometimes not. In any event, a weaker driver should avoid all driving conditions and situations which are too demanding or can cause fatigue.

The physically weaker driver certainly can survive. Here are a few tips:

- ◆ Plan your trips in advance. (See the specific suggestions in this guide.)
- ◆ Use an easily maneuverable vehicle equipped with power steering, automatic transmission and power brakes.
- ◆ Avoid parallel parking whenever possible.
- ◆ Take advantage of available emergency road services.
- ◆ Wear comfortable shoes with non-slip soles.

- ◆ Use a spray-on deicer along with an ice scraper to remove ice and snow from windows.
- ◆ Equip your vehicle with a rear window defogger.

NOT HEALTHY AS AN OX?

JUDGING YOUR FITNESS TO DRIVE

Many people who have serious health problems can still drive safely. Some health problems do not affect one's driving ability at all and others can be controlled with medication. Some illnesses, however, may require that you decrease or even give up your time behind the wheel.

Several of the most common health problems which could affect your driving to different degrees are high blood pressure, arthritis and heart trouble. It is very important to know and accept your limits. We offer these suggestions:

- ◆ Have a thorough check-up at least once a year. If you have an illness or medical problem, ask your doctor how it will affect your driving. Find out whether your problem can be treated in a manner that will allow you to keep on driving.
- ◆ Use common sense about when and where you drive. If you don't feel well, let someone else drive. If you feel a bit "under the weather", avoid difficult driving situations, such as bad weather or heavy traffic.
- ◆ Should you feel faint or dizzy while driving, pull off the road as soon as it is safe to do so. **DO NOT CONTINUE** until you have recovered. If possible, let someone else take over the wheel. Since feeling faint or dizzy can be a warning sign of a serious illness, see a doctor before you drive again.

◆ Watch for signs of blackout. They are a common and serious problem which can happen so quickly, you may hardly be aware you've had one. One indication is the feeling of sudden confusion. Tell your doctor; you may have just had a blackout.

◆ Obtain all the information you can about your health problem(s) so you can honestly judge your fitness to drive. The facts will help you decide whether to go on driving with certain limits, or whether you should stop.

THE MEDICINE GOES DOWN!

THE SIDE EFFECTS OF MEDICATION

Almost everyone takes some type of medication from time to time. However, many people don't realize that side effects can result from even the most common, over-the-counter medication and can create some potentially dangerous situations. Non-prescription cold tablets, for instance, can make one drowsy enough to fall asleep behind the wheel. Further, unexpected reactions can also result when two medicines are taken together, affecting your equilibrium, your vision or your judgement.

Therefore, you might want to consider the following tips when you must take medication:

◆ Always ask your doctor about potential side effects of any prescribed medication. Read the warning labels on both prescription and non-prescription medication packages. If there is a chance that your driving might be affected, don't take the wheel. Ask someone else to drive.

◆ Be sure you know the effect a new medication has on you before attempting to drive. At times, even your doctor may not know how you will react until you have actually taken a particular drug by itself or in combination with your

other medicines.

◆ Never drink alcohol before, during or after taking medicine of any kind. Alcohol is a depressant and reduces alertness and slows normal reflexes. Medication can greatly increase these effects.

◆ Remember to check the expiration date on all medications and throw out those that are outdated.

THE BEST LAID PLANS

ADVANCE TRIP PLANNING

Driving requires a lot of energy and concentration. Taking a long trip can be quite tiring, even though one is sitting down. Needless to say, the longer you drive, the more fatigued you become. The more tired you are behind the wheel, the slower your reaction time and the easier it is to make mistakes in judgement.

Running into difficulty at the end of a long trip can result in greater carelessness and loss of patience than it might if you were not so tired. Therefore, it is wise to plan your trip carefully in advance, setting reasonable limits on your driving so that you will not become fatigued at the wheel.

We suggest the following tips to help you take long trips quite safely:

◆ Use a good up-to-date map and plan your trip and route carefully in advance. By doing this, you can avoid many of the pitfalls that come from driving in a strange place.

◆ Mark your map to indicate the roads, entrances and exits you plan to use.

- ◆ Set a reasonable mileage limit for each day. You will have to decide the most appropriate goal for yourself; however, in good weather on a good highway, between 200 and 300 miles may be plenty of distance to travel in one day.
- ◆ Set a time limit as well, in case road conditions are not favorable and you cannot meet your mileage goal. Four to six hours of driving are a lot for the average driver. Many people will want to drive less.
- ◆ Since you may very well be traveling a long distance at sustained high speeds, make certain before you start that your vehicle can handle this type of driving. Have all parts, systems, tires and fluid levels checked for endurance.
- ◆ Get a good night's sleep before you start out. You can't think well when you are tired.
- ◆ If you eat before traveling, have a light meal. You can become drowsy if you're full from a heavy meal.
- ◆ Once on the road, stop for five or ten minutes every hour or so. Stretch and have a cup of coffee or other refreshment. You'll feel better and drive a lot more safely.
- ◆ If you are traveling with someone else, share the driving. You'll both feel better when you get where you are going.

DECISIONS! DECISIONS!

VEHICLE SIZE AND EQUIPMENT

You may be wondering what size car and what type of equipment are best for you. If so, consider the fact that medium to large automobiles are often more comfortable than small, compact cars. Further, those of medium size are preferable to the very large cars for the older driver, since they are easier to handle and a motorist is less apt to sideswipe other vehicles.

Both power steering and power brakes can contribute to the comfort of the older driver and help alleviate fatigue. Power-assisted steering provides greater maneuverability than does the standard variety and power brakes require less effort to use than regular brakes.

As you choose your vehicle, we suggest you consider:

- ◆ Avoiding a heavily tinted windshield and windows, as they admit less light, especially at night.
- ◆ A wide, adjustable rearview mirror in order to reduce both "blind spots" and glare from the headlights of the vehicles behind you.
- ◆ Outside mirrors on BOTH sides. Try to avoid those that are convex, as they make objects appear farther away than they actually are.

AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

VEHICLE MAINTENANCE

A safe, efficient vehicle equates to one that is properly maintained. Brakes, exhaust systems, cooling systems, lights, windshield wipers and tires are among the many parts that can become worn and defective and thus need periodic repair or replacement. If not properly attended to, a defect in any one of these (or other) items could cause a serious accident.

Preventive maintenance is the most advisable, safest way to care for your vehicle. We suggest the following:

- ◆ Have your car "safety-checked" by a reliable mechanic AT LEAST once per year. This way, defective equipment can be repaired or replaced BEFORE it goes bad.
- ◆ Have your car serviced regularly, following the manufacturer's recommendations in your owner's manual. Pay particular attention to the seasonal maintenance needed in the early fall and late spring.
- ◆ Check the brake, battery and steering fluid levels with every fuel fill-up.
- ◆ Before each trip, check tires for wear, cuts, cracks and proper inflation.
- ◆ Regularly check oil and coolant levels, lights and turn signals.

THE RIBBON OF HIGHWAYS

INTERSTATE DRIVING

Many of the conditions which often contribute to accidents do not exist on interstate highways, such as road crossings. Therefore, traffic on interstates generally moves at a smoother pace and more safely than on local roads and highways. However, when accidents do occur, they are usually quite serious due to the speeds traveled.

There are some basic, yet very important, guidelines and practices for safe driving on these high-speed roadways. When entering, driving on or exiting an interstate highway, please keep the following information in mind:

Entering the Interstate--

- ◆ Interstates are accessed by an entrance ramp.
- ◆ Be alert for "DO NOT ENTER" and "WRONG WAY" signs that warn you not to wrongly enter an exit ramp.
- ◆ As you enter the Interstate by the ramp, the yellow line road markings will appear on your left only. Always make certain to look to the left for this yellow line.
- ◆ Should you enter a ramp in an isolated area and find yellow road markings on your right, you have wrongly entered an exit ramp. **PULL IMMEDIATELY TO THE SHOULDER** and plan a quick turn-about. Make certain you have considered the high speed of oncoming vehicles before turning your car around.
- ◆ The entrance ramp generally leads into an acceleration lane, which allows a driver to match the speed of his or her vehicle to that of the moving traffic.

- ◆ As you approach the interstate, check over your shoulder for an opening in the traffic, adjust your speed to meet that opening, use your turn signal and merge into the traffic. DO NOT STOP unless there is no opening in the traffic.
- ◆ If another vehicle is ahead of you on the entrance ramp, BE PREPARED in case the driver slows or stops without warning.
- ◆ Remember that traffic on the interstate has the right-of-way. You can't always count on other drivers seeing you or moving over to let you enter.

Driving on the Interstate--

- ◆ Obey posted speed limits, maintain a steady speed and keep pace with other traffic.
- ◆ DO NOT follow too closely behind the vehicle in front of you. Since rear-end collisions are the most frequent type of accident on interstates, it is recommended that you leave at least a 3 second "cushion" of space between you and the vehicle ahead. When the weather is bad or the road surface is slick, double or triple that distance.
- ◆ Watch for vehicles entering the interstate. If it is safe, move to another lane to allow them a smooth, safe entry.
- ◆ Avoid unnecessary lane changing. Stay in the right lane, unless overtaking and passing another vehicle.
- ◆ Pass with caution. Always use your signal and check your "blind spots" when changing lanes. Make sure you can see both headlights of the vehicle you are passing in your rearview mirror before pulling back in.

◆ If you miss your exit, go on to the next one. Backing up on the interstate is prohibited under any circumstances.

◆ Never cross the median of an interstate highway.

◆ Drowsiness is one of the greatest dangers in this type of driving. To avoid it, open the windows to obtain fresh air, sing along with the radio and maintain eye movement. Don't stare in one direction.

◆ If you do become drowsy, stop, get out of the vehicle and TAKE A BREAK.

◆ If you are really sleepy, PULL OFF THE HIGHWAY, check into a motel and rest.

Leaving the Interstate--

◆ Plan ahead to leave the interstate. Look for the signs containing information about your exit and the lane you must use.

◆ A mile or so before the exit, signal and move into the proper lane.

◆ Slow down after turning into the deceleration lane.

◆ When the lane is also used as the acceleration lane for entering vehicles, watch carefully for those vehicles as you exit.

◆ Once off the interstate, be aware of two-way traffic and check your speed.

Emergency Stopping on the Interstate--

◆ In the event of a breakdown or other emergency, drive

your vehicle onto the right shoulder of the highway. Make certain all four wheels are well off the road. (Remember, it is less hazardous to drive slowly to the shoulder with a flat tire than to stop along a bridge or underpass.)

- ◆ If you cannot remove your vehicle from the roadway, ask all passengers to leave the vehicle and move off the highway and the shoulder. This precaution is **critical** should a vehicle strike or swerve to avoid yours.

- ◆ Turn on your four-way emergency warning lights. At night, use flares or reflectors.

- ◆ Do not open the door or get out on the traffic side of your vehicle.

- ◆ To summon help, raise the hood and trunk lid or tie a white cloth to the antenna.

DEFENSE! DEFENSE!

DRIVING DEFENSIVELY

Whether driving on the interstate or a small, country road, it is equally important to be alert and drive with care and caution. In other words, drive defensively.

One of the most important things to remember in order to drive defensively is to maintain a safe distance between your vehicle and the one in front of you. A "safe distance" is about one (1) car length for every 10 miles per hour, and you should increase the distance in bad weather. This will help avoid a rear-end collision in case that vehicle makes a sudden stop. It will also afford you the time to make a decision and take action should a child or animal run in front of you.

Another important component of defensive driving is passing. It is preferable to pass on the left. In Maryland, however, it is legal to pass on the right if:

- ◆ The vehicle you are passing is making a left-hand turn.
- ◆ You are on a highway wide enough for two or more lanes of vehicles moving in the same direction and the lane to your right is not obstructed by parked vehicles.
- ◆ You are on a one-way road which is free from obstruction and wide enough for two or more lanes of moving traffic.

No matter what type of roadway, or whether you plan to pass on the left or right, it is important to judge the speed of the lead vehicle before passing. You must stay within the posted speed limit while doing so. Take your time, stay alert and pass ONLY if and when it is safe to do so.

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

HANDLING EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

No matter how careful a driver you are, how well you maintain your vehicle, or how much you strive to obey the law, emergency situations can and do happen. There is no fail-safe method of avoiding unexpected predicaments; however, we have listed several of the more "common emergencies" below along with some tips on how to handle them.

Brake Failure--

- ◆ Try pumping the brake pedal.
- ◆ If pumping does not restore braking ability, use the

emergency (parking) brake. **KEEP THE EMERGENCY BRAKE LOCK RELEASED.**

- ◆ Shift to a lower gear, if possible.
- ◆ If necessary, rub the sides of the tires against the side of a curb.

Wet Brakes--

- ◆ Test your brakes after driving through deep water. They may pull to one side or not hold at all.
- ◆ To dry the brakes, put your car in low gear, drive slowly and apply the brakes lightly.
- ◆ Test your brakes every 200 feet. After several attempts, brake action should return to normal.

Accelerator pedal sticks open--

- ◆ Slap the accelerator pedal **HARD** with your foot.
- ◆ Shift to neutral.
- ◆ Apply the brakes.
- ◆ Pull off the roadway and stop.

Steering Fails--

- ◆ If you suddenly lose steering control, **EASE UP** on the accelerator.
- ◆ If your vehicle continues to stay in the same lane through its "natural balance", wait until it slows down and apply the brakes **GENTLY** to avoid changing direction.
- ◆ If your vehicle heads off the road, towards a pedestrian or other vehicle, apply the brakes **QUICKLY** and use **MAXIMUM PRESSURE**.

Headlights Fail--

- ◆ If the highway is lighted, move onto the shoulder or other available space as rapidly and safely as you can.
- ◆ If the highway is dark, try to turn on your parking lights, your directional signals, or your emergency flashers. **MOVE OFF THE ROADWAY.**

Vehicle Fire--

- ◆ If smoke appears from under the hood, pull off the road and **turn off the ignition.**
- ◆ If the fire is out of control, the gas tank could explode. **Move least 100 feet away from the vehicle.**

Vehicle Approaching in Your Lane--

- ◆ If you see a vehicle coming toward you in your lane, **pull to the right, slow down, sound your horn and flash your headlights.**
- ◆ DO NOT turn into the lane the vehicle has just left. The other driver may "wake up", realize the mistake and move back in his or her proper lane.

Stalling on Railroad Tracks--

- ◆ Look **both ways** for trains. If no train is approaching, attempt to restart the vehicle as you **continue to watch** for a train.
- ◆ If a train is coming, **GET OUT OF THE VEHICLE.** Run along the side of the tracks, toward the train, to avoid being struck by the debris from the crash.

Running off the roadway--

- ◆ First of all, **BE ATTENTIVE** to avoid running off the road and potentially causing serious accidents.

- ◆ Should you run off or be forced off the road, **DO NOT PANIC**.
- ◆ Take your foot **OFF** the accelerator.
- ◆ **Do not jam on the brakes**. Brake carefully or not at all.
- ◆ When you have the vehicle **completely** under control, you can attempt to get back on the roadway. Make sure you are traveling at no more than 15 mph, look for traffic, then turn the wheels sharply toward the roadway.
- ◆ **DO NOT** cross the centerline.

Blowouts--

- ◆ Since blowouts are very much like running off the roadway onto a soft shoulder, **ACT ACCORDINGLY**.
- ◆ **DO NOT** apply your brakes.
- ◆ **Grip** the steering wheel **firmly**.
- ◆ Decelerate and look for a safe place to drive off the road. Do not stop on thoroughfares.
- ◆ Signal a turn.

Flooded Engine--

- ◆ Press the gas pedal to the floor.
- ◆ Run the starter steadily.
- ◆ When the engine starts, release the gas pedal.
- ◆ **Do not pump the gas pedal**. It will make the flooding worse.

Disabled Vehicle--

- ◆ Get all four wheels off the roadway, if at all possible.
- ◆ Tie a handkerchief or white cloth to the radio antenna or to the left door handle.
- ◆ At night, turn on the parking lights or emergency flashers. If available, set out a flare or blinking lights.

TIME TO TURN IN YOUR WHEELS??

EVALUATING WHETHER TO KEEP ON DRIVING

Although many of us don't like to admit it, studies have shown that the physical and mental attributes required for driving **do** decline with age. We have written about a number of these attributes in the preceding pages: eyesight, hearing, reaction time and the ability to judge complex traffic situations. The rate of decline, however, differs for everyone, and the State of Maryland treats each person as an individual with regard to maintaining his or her driving privileges.

Many of us cut back on driving in the interest of safety in ways you may have observed. Some, for example, no longer drive at night, avoid left-hand turns at intersections, or restrict their driving to short trips to familiar locations.

No one wants to drive in an unsafe manner, and drivers may not always be aware of their inability to cope with the demands of safe driving. There are certain clues, though, that signal the time may have come to tuck away that portion of your life called "driving". Perhaps you cannot pass the renewal eye exam; maybe your doctor has suggested that you stop driving or, perhaps, your family members are expressing concern about possible accidents.

To help you determine whether it is time to "turn in your wheels", we suggest you do some real "soul searching". Here are a few questions to think about as you evaluate whether or not it is time to stop driving:

- ◆ Do you feel uncomfortable, unsure, or nervous when you get behind the wheel?
- ◆ Do you find yourself becoming frustrated when traffic becomes heavy?
- ◆ Are you beginning to creep along the highway because you are unable to really judge the speed of the traffic around you, or the distance between your vehicle and those behind and ahead of you?
- ◆ Do you find that driving has become a burden rather than the pleasure it once was?
- ◆ Do you notice that you are unable to see as well as you did? That the signs along the road are becoming a little distorted to you? Or, that objects and people are not quite as clear as they used to be?
- ◆ Are your reactions to the things going on around you a little slower?

Very few of us ever reach the point where we do not enjoy getting into a motor vehicle and viewing all of the wonderful things around us. "Turning in your wheels" does NOT mean that you can no longer enjoy these things. It simply means that you will not be doing the actual driving.

In fact, you may even feel a sense of relief that you can now leave the driving to someone else!

PICTURE THIS!

MVA PHOTO IDENTIFICATION CARD

Do not despair that you will no longer be able to identify yourself when you write a check to merchants, etc., should you or your family believe the time has come for you to stop driving.

The MVA will issue you a photo identification card when you surrender your driver's license. This card is free to citizens over 65 years of age, looks very much like a Maryland driver's license and is just as valid a means of identification as a license.

IT'S THE LAW!

APPLICABLE PROVISIONS OF THE MARYLAND VEHICLE LAW AND THE CODE OF MARYLAND REGULATIONS (COMAR)

There are a number of Maryland Vehicle Law and COMAR provisions which directly relate to one's ability to drive and the right to possess a Maryland driver's license. We have listed below those that we believe may be the most interesting and informative to you. Since we are dealing with the law, which can sound quite complicated, we have paraphrased in a few places. We have also used "MVA" wherever the lawbook uses the phrase "the Administration".

A. The MVA may not issue a driver's license to an individual:

1. Who is an habitual drunkard, habitual user of narcotics, or habitual user of any other drug to a degree

that renders him incapable of safely driving a motor vehicle;

2. Who previously has been adjudged to be suffering from any mental disability or mental disease and who, at the time of application, has not been adjudged competent;

3. Who is unable to exercise reasonable control over a motor vehicle due to disease or disability, including the loss of an arm or leg or both, except that, if he passes the examination required by this title (Title 16 of the Maryland Vehicle Law), the MVA may issue him a restricted license requiring him to wear a workable artificial limb or other similar body attachment;

4. Who does not have visual acuity corrected to at least 20/70 in one eye. (Individuals with lesser vision may obtain a restricted license through a special bioptic telescopic vision waiver program.)

5. Who is 70 years old or older and applying for a new license, unless the applicant presents to the MVA:

a) Proof of his previous satisfactory operation of a motor vehicle; or

b) A written certification acceptable to the MVA from a licensed physician attesting to the general physical and mental qualifications of the applicant.

B. The MVA may suspend, cancel, revoke or refuse a license to an individual on which it has sufficient evidence if the individual:

1. Has been convicted of moving violations so often as to indicate an intent to disregard the traffic laws and the safety of other persons on the highway;

2. Is an unfit, unsafe or habitually reckless or negligent driver of a motor vehicle; or

3. Has fraudulently obtained a license to which he/she is not entitled.

C. A law enforcement officer, after a review of the request by the commanding officer, may request the MVA to retest an applicant who he observed operating in a manner which indicates a physical or mental handicap.

D. A concerned citizen may report a fellow citizen in writing to the Drivers Wellness Section (of the MVA) for a reexamination of an applicant who, in their opinion, has difficulties in driving. The MVA will, after a hearing and/or investigation, have those applicants reexamined where good cause is shown.

E. Any physician and any other person authorized to diagnose, detect, or treat the following disorders, may report to the MVA's Medical Advisory Board any individual 15 years or older who has a disorder that:

1. Is characterized by lapses of consciousness; or

2. Results in corrected visual acuity that fails to comply with the vision requirements stated in the Motor Vehicle Law.

F. A licensee or an applicant for a driver's license shall notify the MVA if he is diagnosed as having one of the following disorders:

Cerebral Palsy
Diabetes
Epilepsy
Multiple Sclerosis
Muscular Dystrophy
Heart condition
Stroke
Alcoholism, or Alcohol Abuse
Drug addiction
Loss of limb or limbs
Organic Brain Syndrome
Manic Depressive disorders
Schizophrenic disorders
Severe anxiety disorders
Other illnesses in which there was a lapse of consciousness, blackout or seizure; or
Disorder which prevents a corrected minimum visual acuity of 20/40 in each eye and a field of vision of at least 140 degrees.

G. It is the responsibility of the individual applying for or renewing a driver's license to indicate on the application if he has been treated for the above-mentioned conditions. The MVA may require a certificate from his physician indicating the onset, diagnosis, and prognosis of the condition and any prescribed medication being taken.

H. Any applicant for a license can be referred to the Medical Advisory Board by the examiner in charge or can be reexamined for a license, provided there is good cause.

SUMMING IT ALL UP

In the preceding pages, we at the Motor Vehicle Administration have tried to give you useful information to think about and act upon as you drive on Maryland's roads.

This is but one attempt to make known some of the rights and responsibilities of older drivers and to keep our citizens safe on the nation's roads. We encourage you to read all the material you can on the subject, become familiar with the laws, ask questions, strive to stay in the best-possible physical and mental condition, and discuss any problems with your physician and/or family.

Whether we are the driver or passenger, we can all have many more years on the road!

**To speak to a
Customer Service Representative:**

1-800-950-1MVA (1682)

For Our Information Line

1-800-638-8347

From Out-of-State

1-301-729-4550

For the Hearing Impaired

TTY 1-800-492-4575

Internet Address

www.marylandmva.com

To request forms or a
"Welcome to MD" packet faxed to you

1-410-424-3050



Motor Vehicle Administration

6601 Ritchie Highway, N.E.
Glen Burnie, Maryland 21062



**Maryland Department
of Transportation**